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Department of State

[Public Notice]

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request for Grant Proposals:

Empower Programs

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement(s)

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA/PE/C/PF-12-52

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415

Application Deadline: May 31, 2012

Executive Summary: The Professional Fellows Division in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' Office of Citizen Exchanges invites proposal submissions for one of three separate "Empower" programs: the Empower Community Program, the Empower Access Program, and the Empower Partnership Program. U.S. public and non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in the Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit a proposal in response to this Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP).

The three "Empower" Programs described in this RFGP support professional exchanges between the people of the United States and their counterparts in other countries who work to provide services and support to persons with disabilities and the communities in which they live. Utilizing fellowship models and institutional linkages, the Empower Programs will provide professional development opportunities for individuals and organizations aimed at strengthening institutional knowledge and organizational capacity,

enhancing outreach capabilities, and increasing the resource base of the communities in which participants live and serve.

I. Funding Opportunity Description:

I.1. Authority:

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

I.2. Purpose and Program Description:

On December 2, 2011, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, President Obama said, "We recommit to ensuring people living with disabilities enjoy full equality and unhindered participation in all facets of our national life. We recognize the myriad contributions that persons with disabilities make at home and abroad, and we remember that disability rights are universal rights to be recognized and promoted around the world...to fulfill this promise, not only in America, but around the world, my

Administration is putting disability rights at the heart of our Nation's foreign policy.”

Extending opportunities to disabled and disenfranchised people around the world is a 21st-Century policy priority for the Department of State. It is also a goal of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) to ensure that individuals with disabilities have opportunities to actively participate in Bureau-sponsored programs.

In recognition of the importance the United States places on embracing diversity, ending discrimination, removing barriers, and upholding the rights, dignity, and equal opportunity for all people both within the U.S. and around the world, the Empower Programs support the aims of the United Nations’ Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The CRPD was created to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities.

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/>

To advance these objectives, the three Empower Programs included in this RFGP—the Empower Community Program, the Empower Access Program, and the Empower Partnership Program—help organizations serving the disabled strengthen their institutional capacity, knowledge, and resources. The fundamental goal of the Empower Programs is to assist disabled individuals in overcoming the barriers that prevent full participation in community life and foster a climate of tolerance and inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

All the Empower Programs must be two-way exchanges involving both U.S and foreign participants or participant organizations in roughly equal numbers. Applicants for the Empower Programs should strive to maximize the number of participants and the length of the in-person program components at the given funding levels. Applicants who engage in public and private partners for programming support, and employ other creative techniques to increase or stretch funding dollars will be deemed more competitive than those that do not, under the Cost Effectiveness and Cost-Sharing criterion.

The objectives of the Empower Programs are to:

1. remove barriers to community opportunities and resources;
2. support the ability of individuals and organizations to serve as leading disability advocates and promote policies and programs benefiting people with disabilities;
3. promote civil society by enabling individuals and organizations working with disabled to share best practices and facilitate cross-sector cooperation through two-way professional exchanges;
4. ensure that people with sensory impairments, intellectual and physical disabilities, cross-disabilities, and their families and communities benefit from the transformational power of international exchanges; and,
5. build or expand sustainable networks of individuals and organizations serving people with disabilities.

ECA anticipates awarding approximately eight (8) Empower cooperative agreements as follows:

Empower Community Program:

The Empower Community Program builds the capacity of small non-profit organizations to develop and implement two-way international exchange programs focused on disability issues. ECA anticipates awarding six (6) cooperative agreements of up to \$130,000 each to U.S. non-profit organizations with less than four years of international exchange experience that are interested in expanding their international engagement, building institutional capacity to administer exchange programs, and providing professional development opportunities to individuals working with persons with disabilities. The U.S.-based and overseas exchange program should be reciprocal in nature with each component two-three weeks in length. The exchange should focus on community-based approaches to inclusive education including support structures for students with disabilities as well as direct care-givers. It is anticipated that one award will be made for each of six geographic regions including Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe, the Near East and North Africa, South and Central Asia, and the Western Hemisphere. Eligible countries for the Empower Community Program are listed in section I. 8 Eligible Countries.

Empower Access Program:

ECA anticipates awarding one (1) cooperative agreement of up to \$420,000 under the Empower Access Program to create a regionally-focused, meaningful, and innovative

professional exchange program for individuals working directly with persons with sensory impairments, intellectual, physical, or cross-disabilities, while expanding the capacity of eligible U.S. organization to advance disability issues through international exchanges. The U.S.-based and overseas exchange program should be reciprocal in nature with each component three-six weeks in length, with a focus on integrating people with disabilities into the wider community through policy initiatives, public outreach, coalition building, accessible technologies, and adaptive and inclusive programming. Eligible countries for the Empower Access Program are listed in section I. 8 Eligible Countries.

Empower Partnership Program:

Under the Empower Partnership Program, ECA anticipates awarding one (1) cooperative agreement of up to \$1,200,000 to create an exchange platform for forging sustainable linkages between U.S. and foreign organizations directly working to address disability access issues within local communities. The Empower Partnership Program provides opportunities through exchanges to directly enhance organizational capacity of the grant recipient as well as participating U.S. and foreign organizations to advocate for and provide outreach, services, programming, and increased access to individuals with disabilities. The U.S.-based and overseas exchange program should be reciprocal in nature with each component three–six weeks in length. Eligible countries for the Empower Partnerships Program are listed in section I.8 Eligible Countries.

Applicants may submit only **ONE proposal (TOTAL)** for this funding opportunity. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will be given no further consideration in the review process.

Please note: Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document. To ensure that proposed activities are appropriate and responsive to this funding opportunity, eligible applicants are strongly encouraged to thoroughly read the solicitation materials, namely, the RFGP, the Program Objectives, Goals, and Implementation document (POGI), and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) prior to developing and submitting proposals.

ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and availability of funds.

Details on all three programs are provided in the POGI accompanying this RFGP.

I.3. Participants:

Under the **Empower Community** and **Empower Access Program** participants must be current and potential leaders or advocates in the public, non-governmental, and private sectors with a stated commitment to serving disability populations. Applicant organizations must make every effort to actively recruit and include individuals with disabilities.

Under the **Empower Partnership Program**, “participants” are defined as community-based non-for-profit, private or public organizations not exceeding 30 full-time programmatic staff that work with, serve, or advocate for disability populations to promote independence and accessibility. Participant organizations must be able to commit organizational resources and staff to work collaboratively on a project of mutual interest before, during, and after the established U.S.-based “partnership” period. Special consideration should be given to ensuring the active participation of organizations with persons with disability as well as those serving individuals with disabilities.

It is envisioned that staff from the selected participant organizations will work as a team throughout the partnership program on a predefined focal area or project. To support these efforts, selected representatives of the participant organizations will travel to one another’s country for project development and implementation. While it is acceptable to have more foreign than U.S. staff representatives travel under this program model, grant applicants are encouraged, to include approximately equal numbers of foreign and U.S. staff representatives to emphasize the reciprocal nature of the program. Recipients should plan on one (1) U.S.-based and one (1) foreign-based exchange component for approximately 30-40 participant organizations for a period of three–six weeks for each exchange. To enhance the possibility that collaborative initiatives continue after the conclusion of the exchange components, proposals should identify ways to support and bolster follow-on projects through existing technologies. Staff representatives from the participant organizations must possess intercultural and English language skills necessary to benefit fully from the fellowship.

I.4. Partner Organizations:

A critical goal of the **Empower Community Program** is to increase opportunities for U.S. citizens to work with foreign counterparts on educational and cultural issues of mutual concern by developing a cadre of smaller U.S. nongovernmental organizations better able to support exchange projects in the future. The Empower Community Program aims to build the institutional capacity of U.S. and foreign nongovernmental organizations in supporting U.S. foreign policy objectives through international exchanges and better serving disabled populations here and abroad. Applicants must identify the U.S.-based and any foreign-based organizations and individuals with whom they are proposing to collaborate to implement the Empower Community Program, and describe any previous cooperative activities.

The **Empower Access and Empower Partnership Program** seeks to build organizational capacity to administer international exchange programs serving individuals with sensory impairments, intellectual, physical, and cross-disabilities. Applicants must identify the U.S.-based and any foreign-based organizations and individuals with whom they are proposing to collaborate to implement the Empower Access and Empower Partnership Program, and describe any previous cooperative activities.

For all three Empower Programs applicants should demonstrate institutional capacity in countries and regions overseas, whether through their own resources or through

partnerships with other organizations or institutions. Proposals must demonstrate capacity both within the United States and overseas to recruit and secure effective and appropriate participants and organizations for the Empower Programs. The Bureau will look favorably on proposals that include letters of commitment from possible host or partner organizations under the Institutional Capacity and Track Record criterion.

I. 5. Project Activities:

Projects in the **Empower Community Program** and the **Empower Access Program** should include placement of foreign participants in carefully identified fellowships in public, non-governmental, and private sector organizations where they will work with U.S. counterparts on areas of mutual interest. Placements for the Empower Community Program should focus on issues related to inclusive education and educational policies.

The Empower Access Program will focus on such issues as NGO management and capacity building, inclusive practices in the arts, adaptive technology, sports management, inclusive education policies, wellness initiatives, and advocacy issues.

Overseas exchange components should build upon issues, activities, and program models explored during the U.S.-based exchange. U.S. participants should be exposed in meaningful ways to organizational and community-based practices and programming, policy directives, adaptive strategies, and inclusive approaches of their foreign counterparts. Program activities should focus on providing both U.S. and foreign participants substantive professional development experiences with direct applicability to their everyday lives.

The **Empower Partnership Program** will facilitate the pairing of U.S. and foreign participant organizations to work collaboratively to provide increased services and access to individuals and organizations working within and with disability populations.

I. 6. Program Guidelines:

In a cooperative agreement, the Professional Fellows Division within ECA will be substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. The Professional Fellows Division anticipates working closely with recipient organizations to ensure that all aspects of individual projects support the Empower Programs' goals and objectives. ECA's activities and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, participation in the design and direction of program implementation. The Office of the Special Advisor for International Disability Rights will also provide significant guidance on the Empower Programs.

Additional guidelines and programming responsibilities of the recipient organization and the Professional Fellows Division are described in the POGI.

I. 7 Timelines:

Timelines for the Empower Community Program, Empower Access Program, and the Empower Partnership Program are included in the accompanying POGI.

I.8. Eligible Countries:

The Empower Programs support countries which have signed or ratified the (CRPD). Proposals that target countries or themes not listed in this solicitation will be deemed technically ineligible. No guarantee is made or implied that every country will have participants. ECA reserves the right to amend or modify the list of participating countries should conditions change in the host country or if other countries are identified as priorities.

Countries eligible for participation in the Empower Programs are as follows:

Africa: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda

East Asia and Pacific: Australia, Burma, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand, Vanuatu, and Vietnam

Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Moldova, Norway, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, and Ukraine

Near East and North Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen

South and Central Asia: Bangladesh, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

Western Hemisphere: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, and Nicaragua

Empower Community: Grant applicants should select one to two (1- 2) countries of focus upon which to build their project model.

Empower Access: Grant applicants should select one region in which to focus with at least three to four (3 -4) countries included in the project model.

Empower Partnerships: To the fullest extent possible, project models should include all eligible countries listed above but at a minimum at least three to four (3-4) countries from every geographic region should be included in applicant proposals.

I.9. Contact Information:

For the Empower Community Program, please contact Carol Herrera,

HerreraCA1@state.gov, 202-632-6054

For the Empower Access Program, please contact Steve Ramirez, RamirezJS@state.gov,

202-632-9460

For the Empower Partnership Program, please contact Linnéa Allison,

AllisonLE@state.gov, 202-632-6060

II. Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under number I above.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY-2011, carried over into FY-2012 for obligation.

Approximate Total Funding: \$2.4 million, divided across the three Empower Programs.

Approximate Number of Awards: Eight cooperative agreements

Approximate Average Award:

Ceiling of Award Range: Empower Community: \$130,000 (x 6) = \$780,000; Empower Access: \$420,000 (x 1) = \$420,000, Empower Partnerships: \$1,200,000 (x 1) = \$1,200,000

Anticipated Award Date: September 1, 2012

Anticipated Project Completion Date: April 1, 2014

Additional Information:

Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew the Empower Partnership cooperative agreement for two additional fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

III. Eligibility Information:

III.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the ECA encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed

as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

a.) ECA grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in ECA funding. ECA anticipates making six awards, in an amount of \$130,000 to organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges to support program and administrative costs required to implement the Empower Community exchange program. Furthermore, ECA anticipates making two additional awards up to \$1,620,000 (\$420,000 for the Empower Access Program and \$1,200,000 for the Empower Partnership Program). Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply to the Empower Access and Empower Partnership Programs. ECA encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the following: (list requirements) or they will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

- Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition.
- If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process. **Please note:** Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.
- Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$130,000. Therefore, applicants should explain, with examples, their experience in conducting international exchanges, and, if that experience is less than four years, should limit their proposed grant budgets to \$130,000.

IV. Application and Submission Information:

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, ECA staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

IV.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:

David Gustafson, Professional Fellows Division, ECA/PE/C/PF, SA-5, Third Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20522-0503, phone: 202-632-6083, fax: 202-632-9355, GustafsonDP@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package.

Please refer to Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/PF-12-52 also located at the top of this announcement when making your request.

Alternatively, an electronic application package may be obtained from grants.gov. Please see section IV.3f for further information.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify David Gustafson and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/PF-12-52 located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the ECA's website at <http://exchanges.state.gov/grants/open2.html>, or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

IV.3. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f. “Application Deadline and Methods of Submission” section below.

IV.3a. You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package.

IV.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget. Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

IV.3c. All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in the CCR until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually

after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. Failure to register in the CCR will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and

Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

IV.3d. Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

IV.3d.1 Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this RFGP, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this RFGP will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, ECA expects that any organization receiving an

award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://exchanges.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division

U.S. Department of State

ECA/EC/D/PS, SA-5, 5th Floor

2200 C Street, NW

Washington, DC 20037

IV.3d.2 Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into your proposal. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

IV.3d.3. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the

activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of

seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term

outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

IV.3e. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

IV.3e.1. Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Budget requests may not exceed the amounts stated under each Empower Program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative

and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification. Review of your budget will benefit from your professional judgment of costs or activities in the proposal. The Bureau is committed to containment of administrative expenses, consistent with overall program objectives and sound management principles.

IV.3e.2. Allowable costs for the program are included in the accompanying POGI.

Please also refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

IV.3f. Application Deadline and Methods of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: **May 31, 2012**

Reference Number: ECA/PE/C/PF-12-52

Methods of Submission:

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov

(<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the “Find” portion of the system.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov

Please follow the instructions available in the ‘Get Started’ portion of the site

(<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: Monday – Friday, 7AM – 9PM Eastern Time

Email: support@grants.gov

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. REVIEW PROCESS

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for cooperative agreements resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. Quality of the Program Idea: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.

2. Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives: Program objectives should be stated clearly and should reflect the applicant's expertise in the subject area and region. Objectives should respond to the thematic areas in this announcement and should relate to the current conditions in the target country/countries. Detailed agendas and relevant work plans should complement the narrative in explaining how objectives will be achieved. Timelines should be comprehensive in nature and include deadlines for completion of major tasks. The substance of workshops, Fellowships, seminars and/or consulting should be described in detail with sample schedules included for each major workshop, seminar, or conference proposed. Responsibilities of proposed in-country partners should be clearly described. A discussion of how the applicant intends to address language issues should be included, if needed.

3. Institutional Capacity and Track Record: Proposals should include (1) the institution's mission and date of establishment; (2) detailed information about proposed in-country partner(s) and the history of the partnership; (3) an outline of prior awards--U.S. government and/or private support received within the scope of community development, working with marginalized populations, and disability rights or advocacy; and (4) descriptions and resumes of experienced staff members who will implement the program. Any previous grants received from the ECA should be listed by office (Citizen Exchanges, International Visitors, Academic Exchanges, etc.) project name, countries, year, and amount. The proposal should reflect the institution's expertise in the subject area and knowledge of the conditions in the target country/countries. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for

past Bureau grants as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior grant recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program's goals. The Bureau strongly encourages applicants to submit letters of support from proposed in-country partners, past participants, or proposed hosting organizations.

4. Cost Effectiveness and Cost Sharing: Overhead and administrative costs in the proposal budget, including salaries, honoraria and subcontracts for services, should be kept to a minimum. Proposals in which the administrative costs do not exceed 25% of the total requested ECA grant funds will be more competitive under this criterion. Applicants are strongly encouraged to cost share a portion of overhead and administrative expenses. Cost-sharing and in-kind contributions, including contributions from the applicant, proposed in-country partner(s), and other sources should be included in the budget request. Proposal budgets that do not reflect cost sharing will be deemed not competitive under this criterion.

5. Support of Diversity: Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration (selection of participants, program venue, program evaluation, etc.) and program content (orientation, wrap-up sessions, program meetings, resource materials, follow-up activities, etc.). Applicants should refer to the Bureau's Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI).

6. Multiplier Effect/Follow-on Activities: Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

7. Project Evaluation: Proposals should include a detailed plan to evaluate the program, both as activities unfold and at the end of the program. Program objectives should target clearly defined results in quantitative terms. Competitive evaluation plans will describe how applicant organizations would measure these results, including the evaluative methodology and tools to be utilized and proposals. Proposals should include draft data collection instruments (surveys, questionnaires, etc.) in Tab E and if relevant, samples data sets from similarly conducted programs.

VI. Award Administration Information

VI.1a. Award Notices:

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive an Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

VI.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments".

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>.

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

VI.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

Mandatory:

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The performance reports (PPR) must be submitted electronically to the Grants Office at reportseca@state.gov with a copy sent to the Program Officer. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/> . Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.
- 2.) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award.
- 4.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

5.) Quarterly program and financial reports highlighting all major activities undertaken during the grant period including program analysis and lessons learned.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.)

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

All reports must be sent to the ECA Grants Office and ECA Program Officer listed in the final assistance award document.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: **David Gustafson**, Professional Fellows Division, ECA/PE/C/PF, SA-5, Third Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20522-0503, phone: 202-632-6083, fax: 202-632-9355, GustafsonDP@state.gov

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the specific Empower program (Empower Community, Empower Access, or Empower Partnership Program) and number ECA/PE/C/PF-12-52.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals.

Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

VIII. Other Information:**Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section VI.3 above.

AMENDMENT TO THE RFGP LISTED ABOVE:

Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

**NOTICE: For New Organizations Currently Not Registered in
the Central Contracting Registry (CCR) during the period
May 24 – June 4, 2012**

SUMMARY:

The United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, announces a revision to the following Request for Grant Proposals (RFGPs) posted on its website and on Grants.gov to allow new organizations that are not currently registered in the CCR to submit

proposals electronically via e-mail to the following
address: e-mail@state.gov

This revision is due to the unexpected migration of CCR to a new System for Award Management (SAM) taking place in the coming weeks. Again, this revision only applies to organizations that are currently not registered in the Central Contracting Registry (CCR) during the period May 24 - June 4, 2012 and applies to the following RFGPs:

- 1.) U.S. - Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program - Reference number - ECA/PE/C/PY-12-04 - Closing Date: May 24, 2012;
- 2.) Ngwang Choephel Fellows Program - Reference number- ECA/PE/C/PF-12-54 - Closing Date: May 25, 2012;
- 3.) FY-2013 Critical Languages Scholarships for Intensive Summer Institutes - Reference number - ECA/A/E-13-01/O-Y- Closing Date: May 25, 2012;
- 4.) Workshops for Youth Leaders in Teaching English and Social Media and Civil Society - Reference number - ECA/PE/C/PY-12-48 - Closing Date: May 31, 2012;
- 5.) Youth Leadership Program - Reference number- ECA/PE/C/PY-12-59 - Closing Date: May 31, 2012;
- 6.) Empower Programs - Reference number - ECA/PE/C-12-52 - Closing Date: May 31, 2012;

7.) International Airport Arrival and Departure Program -
Reference Number - ECA/PE/V-13-04-OY-B - Closing Date: June
1, 2012;

8.) Global Connections and Exchange Program: U.S. -
Australia Virtual Environmental Partnership - Reference
Number ECA/PE/C/PY- 12-55-Closing Date: June 4, 2012;

9.) Global Connections and Exchange Programs: Global
Connections 2.0 and Global Connections Afghanistan -
Reference Number - ECA/PE/C/PY-12-56-Closing Date: June 4,
2012.

BACKGROUND:

As stated in all RFGPs, a current Central Contractor
Registration (CCR) is required in order to apply for all
Federal Financial Assistance Awards (grants or cooperative
agreements) via the Grants.gov web portal. We have
recently been advised that the CCR system will be migrated
into a new System for Award Management, or SAM beginning
next week. **Please note:** CCR will stop accepting data at
11:59 pm on **Wednesday, May 23, 2012**. No new registrations
can be submitted after that time. Any registrations in
process will be on hold until SAM goes live the morning of
Tuesday, May 29, 2012. CCR will not process any new
registrations on Thursday (May 24, 2012), Friday (May 25,
2012), over that weekend, or on Memorial Day Monday (May

28, 2012). If a new registrant who is trying to apply for a grant on Grants.gov is not active in CCR by Wednesday (May 23, 2012), their active status will not appear in Grants.gov prior to SAM going live on Tuesday, May 29, 2012.

FOR NEW APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONS ONLY:

Due to the proposed migration of the CCR, if you are a new organization applying for ECA Federal Financial Assistance Awards for the first time you will be temporarily eligible to submit your applications to the following specially-designated mailbox via email in lieu of submitting via Grants.gov at e-mail@state.gov

Please be mindful that all other details outlined in the original RFGPs still apply (deadline date, funding amounts, eligibility, etc.). If you are a currently CCR-registered organization you will NOT be allowed to submit to this email address. You MUST submit through Grants.gov as outlined in the above RFGPs or your application will be deemed ineligible.

HOW WILL THE TRANSITION IMPACT CURRENT REGISTRANTS?

If a current registrant's record was set to expire between May 15, 2012 and July 15, 2012, CCR will be extending their expiration date by 90 days. They will receive an e-mail notification from CCR with a new expiration date once the extension is complete. They will receive standard e-mail reminders once SAM goes live to update their record based on this new expiration date. Those e-mail notifications will come from SAM.

For more information on the transition and on SAM in general, please visit the following websites.

<https://www.bpn.gov/ccr/NewsDetail.aspx?id=2012&type=N>

<https://www.sam.gov/sam/>

You may access additional information on the CCR site [here](#).

Other Information:

Notice:

The terms and conditions in this Notification and the RFQPs referenced in this Notification are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the

RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government.